

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for handling an information item (10) which originates from an information provider, is made available by a service provider and can be called via a communications network, comprising the following method steps:

a) having the service provider allocate an ident code (15) which identifies the information item (10) to the information provider;

b) transferring the information item (10) from the information provider to the service provider, and making the transferred information item (10) publicly accessible;

c) determining whether deleting the information item (10) from the service provider if the ident code (15) is not has been transmitted to the service provider by the information provider within a monitoring period, deleting the information item from the service provider if the ident case has not been transmitted, and resetting the monitoring period and repeating step c) if the ident code has been transmitted to the service provider by the information provider.

2. (original) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the ident code (15) is transmitted, together with a handling instruction (20, 30, 40) relating to the information item, to the service provider by the information provider.

3. (original) The method as claimed in claim 2, in which, during the transmission of the ident code (15), together with a handling instruction (20, 30, 40), by the information provider, the service provider handles the information item (10) in accordance with the handling instruction (20, 30, 40).

4. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 2, in which the handling instruction comprises at least one of changing the information item (30), retaining the information item (20), and deleting the information item (40).

5. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the monitoring period can be predetermined.

6. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the monitoring period takes place automatically.

7. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the communications network (5) is the Internet.

8. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the ident code (15) is transmitted to the information provider by e-mail.

9. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the ident code (15) is transmitted, together

with the handling instruction (20, 30, 40) relating to the information item, to the service provider by e-mail.

10. (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, in which the information item (10) made available has at least a last update date of the information (10).

11. (currently amended) A method for establishing the currency of an information item that is made generally accessible, comprising the following steps:

transmitting an information item from an information provider to a service provider;

transmitting from the service provider to the information provider an ident code;

making the information item publicly accessible over a network through the service provider;

monitoring by the service provider to determine whether the information provider has transmitted the ident code to the service provider within a predetermined monitoring period, and deleting the information item from the service provider at a conclusion of the predetermined monitoring period if the information provider has not transmitted the ident code to the service provider within the predetermined monitoring period, and resetting the predetermined monitoring period and repeating the monitoring step is the information provider has transmitted the ident code to the service provider within the predetermined monitoring period.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein if the service provider receives the ident code from the information provider within the predetermined monitoring period, the service provider resets the predetermined monitoring period and repeats the monitoring step.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the information provider transmits handling instructions to the service provider in addition to the ident code.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 13, wherein the handling instructions received by the service provider cause the service provider to perform one of the actions of retaining, modifying, and deleting the information item.

15. (new) A method for handling an information item (10) which originates from an information provider, is made available by a service provider and can be called via a communications network, comprising the following method steps:

a) having the service provider allocate an ident code (15) which identifies the information item (10) to the information provider;

b) transferring the information item (10) from the information provider to the service provider, and making the transferred information item (10) publicly accessible; and

c) deleting the information item (10) from the service provider if the ident code (15) is not transmitted to the service provider by the information provider within a monitoring period;

wherein the information item on the service provider is information posted on an internet message board.

16. (new) The method as claimed in claim 15, in which the ident code (15) is transmitted, together with a handling instruction (20, 30, 40) relating to the information item, to the service provider by the information provider.

17. (new) The method as claimed in claim 16, in which, during the transmission of the ident code (15), together with a handling instruction (20, 30, 40), by the information provider, the service provider handles the information item (10) in accordance with the handling instruction (20, 30, 40).

18. (new) The method as claimed in claim 16, in which the handling instruction comprises at least one of changing the information item (30), retaining the information item (20), and deleting the information item (40).

19. (new) The method as claimed in claim 15, in which the monitoring period can be predetermined.

20. (new) The method as claimed in claim 15, in which the monitoring period takes place automatically.